

Ben Massell

#278027 | March 16, 2021

Testimony to **Portland City Council** on the **Shelter to Housing Continuum Project, Recommended Draft**

I am writing to strongly advocate for the removal of the Open Space Zones from consideration for either temporary or permanent homeless shelters. Public parks and open spaces are important to the social fabric and health of the community. As we move toward even higher density, they become increasingly the only outdoor spaces that residents of the city have. Making them available for camping or homeless shelter would remove them from their intended purpose and would be harmful to the continuity and health of the community as a whole. Portlanders have supported tax measures to address inequities in parks, trails and other natural areas with the expectation that they will be maintained for their intended purpose. To allow these areas to be used for a purpose entirely at odds with the intended use of these areas would be a violation of public trust. The housing crisis that Portland is facing is a longer term problem. Making open spaces available for temporary or permanent shelter would not solve the problem, and is very likely to exacerbate the problem. The City Council and staff need to do better. This proposal is not acceptable or sustainable and needs to be removed from consideration

Testimony is presented without formatting.